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## "Make Up Your Mind"

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## "Make up Your Mind"

Once, when I was slow making a decision about some small matter that was required of me, I was told: "Make up your mind." The meaning was clear enough: "Decide; now."

Some people tend to make decisions more quickly than others according to their preferences about gathering information. When decisions have to be made with little time for reflection, those who have confidence will decide quickly; those with little confidence might not be able to make a decision at all. But confidence can be well grounded in reality or it can be delusional.

One kind of self-confidence is focused on self, and can best be described by its distinguishing quality of arrogance. Persons with this kind of confidence are convinced that they are right in all their decisions simply because they say that they are. The source of their confidence is in their control over the lives of the persons and the environment within which they act. They can make quick decisions, knowing that what they decide will be done. Bullies and dictators have great self-confidence for making decisions because they neither reflect upon nor deal with the consequences of their decisions on the persons or things they affect. They seek no information about the impact of their choices on any but themselves.

Another kind of confidence is based on one's integrity and values. Persons who may have little power over the lives of others know that their decisions are not about controlling results, but about choosing that which is better for all concerned. They can make decisions readily, because they have learned to trust their sense of right and wrong. They maintain a commitment to justice, and to love of neighbor. They have discovered that they are much happier when making decisions based on their values, even when those values are not accepted by others.

Some decision-makers have confidence based not only on a firm commitment to their values, but on their relationship with God. They have come to integrate their process of making decisions with a sense of their own responsibility for speaking and acting, together with their experiences of discerning the guidance of the Spirit. Such people have confidence in their own orientation towards what is good for themselves and for others, and they have confidence in the indications that God provides as to the better option in each set of particular circumstances.

The Spirit of God is for us an inspirational spirit, operating in that part of ourselves where we make decisions, where we choose whether or not to act or to speak. Those who are confident of God's abiding presence and interest in their every-day lives are capable of making quick decisions, when present realities require them to do so.

Those who trust in God do not necessarily make decisions faster than others. Their reliance is not only on their values, but on indications of God's guidance. Those who seek inspiration from God need to take whatever time is necessary – whether a millisecond or a lengthy process of formal discernment – to receive what they seek. Confidence in God does not lead to presumption, but to gratitude. Persons who become aware of the powerful but often gentle movements within their hearts enable them to make decisions confidently. God wants what is best for us and for all, and communicates directly with those who desire the same.

While we might have occasion to want others to make decisions more quickly, we want even more that they will decide from an appropriate self-confidence. Whatever we can provide by way of supporting that confidence will be of much more value than urging: "Make up your mind."